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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, who has given us the rich heritage of this good land, You know our needs for this day better than we do. Help us to listen to the quiet direction of Your Spirit. Consecrate our speech to Your service, that we may not sin with our tongues.

Keep us free from all untrue and unkind words. Remove from us all anxiety, and give us moral and physical courage for the living of these days.

As Your Senators today seek to do what is right, make Your way clear to them. Strengthen them to face the pressures that come with working for freedom. When their day's work is done, may they feel Your smile and hear Your whisper of "well done." And, Lord, bless our military men and women. Let them this day feel Your presence. We pray this in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 3, 2003.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CHAFEE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. In my capacity as a Senator from Rhode Island, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

CLASS ACTION LAWSUITS

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will discuss this morning a very important issue of legal reform that is needed in the United States. I have been a practicing lawyer for most of my adult life

and have litigated in quite a number of different forums. I believe in the legal system. It is critical for America's vitality. There is no doubt in my mind the strength of this American democracy, the power of our economy, our ability to maintain freedom and progress is directly dependent on the superb legal system of which we are a part.

We have a magnificent number of lawyers around this country. Some have been criticized, and rightly so, but for the most part they are good, aggressive attorneys utilizing the laws that are available.

This Congress passes laws involving litigation in America. It is incumbent upon us as the years and centuries go by to periodically review what is happening in our courts. We ask ourselves, are the results that are occurring effective? Are they furthering our national policy, correcting wrongs, punishing wrongdoers, generating compensation for those who suffer losses in a fair and objective way?

Anyone who knows much about the system today knows there are some problems. Lawyers are utilizing principles of law that enhance the problem. There are court decisions that allow them to go further than they have before. As a result, everyone is paying huge amounts of money for insurance. Americans buy a homeowner's policy with an umbrella in case someone sues them. Americans in business review their insurance and liability policies on a regular basis, frequently calling insurance companies and asking for more coverage, more protection. Without even asking for more coverage and more protection, the rates are going up all over America.

One matter we need to talk about and act on is class action lawsuits. A bill to reform class action lawsuits has been considered for a number of years in this body. It was considered in the Senate Judiciary Committee of which I am a member. After several years of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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